

aid, and other more powerful, peaceful ways of engaging with the rest of the world.

Mr. Speaker, I hope all of my colleagues will take note of Friday's anniversary and realize that now is the time to turn the tide on our policies in Afghanistan. We need to end this war. We need to do it now. We need to promote peace through democracy. We need to promote peace through diplomacy and development. We must bring our troops home.

THE EDA ELIMINATION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. POMPEO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. POMPEO. Mr. Speaker, since coming to Congress 9 years ago, I have sadly relearned that the government in Washington D.C. only grows and grows and grows. When Democrats and many Republicans, too, come to the floor of the House and talk about spending cuts, they are often talking simply about slowing the rate of growth of government. There is seldom, if ever, any real discussion about cutting the size of the Federal Government or about eliminating an entire program or agency. But today, with \$14.8 trillion in debt, we can't continue to simply slow the rate of growth. We've got to cut it, and we've got to get rid of some things.

As a first step this week, I will proffer a bill that will eliminate the Economic Development Agency. It's part of the Department of Commerce and was established in 1965 as an element of President Johnson's Great Society. For over 45 years, the EDA has spent billions on local projects, not national projects, trying to pick winners and losers amongst various projects by region, industry, and community. Much like a stimulus bill or earmarks, the EDA provides loans and grants to pet projects of the administration in power.

In 2008, the EDA spent \$2 million on the Harry Reid Research and Technology Park at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Just last year, it spent \$25 million on the Global Climate Mitigation Incentive Fund. This year, the agency will spend almost \$300 million of taxpayer dollars. Now, this might not sound like a lot of money sometimes here in Washington, D.C., but in Newton, in Independence, in Wichita, and in Goddard, Kansas, that's still a lot of money.

I want to take just a minute to talk about the EDA. Most folks in Congress and most folks back in Kansas will have never heard of it. I had not before I entered Congress. It provides these grants and loans to projects it selects all over the country. At its very core, the EDA is nothing more than a giant wealth redistribution machine. It takes money from people in one place and at one time and redistributes it all across the country for inherently local projects.

For example, it gave \$2 million to the "culinary amphitheater," wine tasting

room, and gift shop in Washington State. It gave \$350,000 to renovate a theater in Colorado. In 2011, it gave \$1.4 million to build infrastructure development so that a steel plant of \$1.6 billion could be built in Minnesota. Like the vast majority of projects, that steel plant would have been built without Federal taxpayer dollars. It was a \$1.6 billion project helped by the Federal Government to the tune of only \$1.4 million.

Our even bigger problem, however, is with EDA. It's duplicative. It's just one of at least 80 Federal economic development agencies. HUD and Ag and HHS all have economic development grants as well.

Second, it's ineffective. It typically provides a very small part of any given project. The GAO reports that most of its financing did not have any significant effect on the success of projects and produced, at best, inconclusive results and, in some cases, may even detract from a more flexible workforce.

Third, this is an incredibly wasteful agency. It was identified by GAO as one of the agencies that ought to go away. Indeed, a recent inspector general audit of 10 projects totaling \$45 million showed that 29 percent of the grant money had been wasted due to various violations of EDA grant requirements. Four of the 10 projects EDA funded in that group were never completed.

Finally and perhaps more importantly, this is not the role of the Federal Government. As the Cato Institute has written, the Federal Government has no business trying to direct economic activity through politicized subsidy vehicles like the EDA. We've seen that with bad outcomes, like with Solyndra, only too recently.

Every great journey starts with a single step. This is a small agency, but it's time for the first time in decades that we eliminate an entire program, an entire agency, so that it cannot continue to grow and grow and grow as part of our Federal Government. I would ask my colleagues to support the EDA Elimination Act.

POVERTY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, as one of the founding members of the congressional Out of Poverty Caucus, I rise today in my ongoing effort to sound the alarm on poverty.

As you may know, the census released data showing that 46.2 million Americans lived in poverty in 2010. The data also revealed that the poverty rate for whites was 9.9 percent in 2010. Worse, the poverty rate for African Americans was 27.4 percent. For Latinos, the poverty rate was 26.6 percent. For Asian Pacific Americans, the poverty rate was 12.1 percent.

These statistics come on the somber anniversary of the 10 years of the war

in Afghanistan, which was a blank check that should not have been written and that, of course, I could not support. In many ways, this war has significantly contributed to these staggering statistics, which we know are not just numbers but are human lives. We must create jobs. We have to create a way to maintain our social safety net.

So today I am here to ask my colleagues to join 47 Members of Congress and me in a letter to the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction, asking them to protect vital programs that comprise our social safety net, including but not limited to Medicaid, Medicare, and Social Security, as well as the programs that provide the economic security and opportunity to millions of Americans.

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None of us envy the work of those members on this Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction, as they will have to make tough choices that affect the lives of millions of Americans.

However, we should all recognize that for the last 25 years, when we have come to deficit reduction agreements, these agreements have, for the most part, protected low-income programs. We absolutely cannot balance the budget on the backs of the most vulnerable, those people facing or living in poverty. This is really a moral obligation that we cannot ignore.

These programs assist the over-46 million Americans living in poverty in 2010—men, women, children, young and old alike from all backgrounds—in obtaining or maintaining their access to basic, mind you, and I am just talking about basic human needs, including food, shelter and health care. These vital safety net programs both support and create consumers, which results in increased demand and job creation. This, of course, reduces our deficit by enabling people to participate in this economy.

And not only that, many of these programs do provide pathways out of poverty and opportunities for all. More and more Americans are struggling to find work and struggling to make ends meet. And until we create jobs, and we have a way, a pathway where people clearly can be provided these opportunities, we have a real moral obligation to protect these programs. Anything short of this is really un-American.

In times like these, it's unconscionable to consider cutting programs that help those most in need like our Nation's seniors and our Nation's children. Asking the Joint Select Committee for Deficit Reduction to protect these vital human programs is, though, not enough. We have to do more. The most effective anti-poverty program is an effective jobs program.

So while I ask my colleagues to join me on the letter to the Joint Select Committee, I am also here to ask Speaker BOEHNER to move the American Jobs Act as soon as possible to